

A BREW MASTER'S SUCCESS STORY

During Randal G. Sprecher's military service days in Augsburg, Germany in the late 60's, he acquired a taste for the traditional style of European brews and the dream to make quality beer was born. The dream became a reality when Sprecher Brewing Co. was founded in 1985



When Randy returned to the states in 1969, he enrolled in the Oceanography department at the University of California-Humboldt where he earned a B.S. degree with a strong emphasis on math and chemistry. At that time, he also became very involved in "home brewing" and developed some beer and soft drink recipes.

Randy has worn many hats before becoming "brewmaster" and owner of Sprecher Brewing. He was a claims representative for the Social Security Administration, built custom homes, participated in several ocean cruises doing oceanographic research and a unique variety of short term efforts with natural health care and analytical chemistry.

During this time, Randy also continued his education. Randy's varied work history helped to prepare him for the numerous demands of a business start-up.

In 1980, after completing a year-long program in fermentation science, Pabst Brewing hired Randy as a Supervisor of Brewing Operations where he remained until he was laid off in 1984.

Randy decided now was the time to begin the implementation of his dream to build the first new brewery licensed in Wisconsin since Prohibition. But, capital costs for a modern brewery startup and building a new brewery in Miller Brewings' back yard is a tough way to start. Thanks to Randy's entrepreneurial nature, he gained the confidence to get the job done.

Constructing brewing equipment, brewing and delivering beer was totally consuming for the first few years of Sprecher Brewing's growth with Randy putting in 12 and 16 hours a day as the norm.

Having a natural talent for purchasing used or "pre-owned" equipment" and reconfiguring it to fit brewing needs allowed Randy to be very resourceful in the early days of building the brewery. Lager tanks in the aging cellar were originally dairy tanks until they were modified for beer production. Randy also made the initial gas-fired brewhouse equipment from dairy sources.

Using these natural talents allowed for considerable savings but they still cost money. Randy secured his first loan using investment monies he had saved and his four automobiles as collateral. Subsequently, Randy received several loans from SBA between 1987 and 1994 that significantly helped to make his business a success.

Currently, Sprecher Brewing Co. is a successful business enterprise producing 14 traditional craft beers and seven gourmet sodas. Sprecher products are sold in Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas and Washington as well as Wisconsin and have 67 distributors. Randy is also working on selling Sprecher products in New York and New Jersey as well.

The microbrewery location in Glendale is used for public tours and special events and this year, expects to accommodate 20,000 people.

The business is located in owned-space and provides dental and health care benefits for employees as well as a 401K program that the company contributes twenty-five percent to. Continuing education and retraining are offered to employees and is structured on an individual case basis. Education has always been of paramount importance in Randy's model for personal and business success.



Randy and Sprecher give back to the community through reading programs for children, donations to Public Television, Children's Hospital charities and hundreds of donations to groups of all kinds.

"Combined with a strong work ethic, a good dose of luck, and with the help and guidance of SBA and other institutions, my dream to produce a quality beer became a reality," says Randy. "Thank you SBA for being there."

Randy is the embodiment of what the word entrepreneur means. He continues to talk-the-talk and walk-the-walk of the entrepreneur that keeps Sprecher Brewing growing and expanding.

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